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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, CA
SUBJ: STEELWORKERS ELECTION IN CANADA

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: UNOFFICIAL AND INCOMPLETE RETURNS IN UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA (USWA) ELECTION IN CANADA GIVE MCBRIDE-WILLIAMS SLATE CLEAR MAJORITY. CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL DIRECTOR AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS SUPPORTING MCBRIDE-WILLIAMS TEAM VIRTUALLY ASSURED OF ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. AS OF FEBRUARY 12 STILL INCOMPLETE USWA ELECTION RETURNS AMONG 193,000 CANADIAN MEMBERS SHOW MCBRIDE LEAD OVER CHALLENGER SADLOWSKI 52,765 TO 16,435. LYNN WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR DISTRICT 6 (ONTARIO), RUNNING AS INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY OUTDREW HIS TEAMMATE MCBRIDE BY OBTAINING 60,463 VOTES TO 11,862 FOR SADLOWSKI'S RUNNING MATE RODRIGUEZ. IF ELECTED, AS SEEMS LIKELY, WILLIAMS, A 52-YEAR-OLD, PROGRESSIVE, INDUSTRIAL UNIONIST (NDP ACTIVIST), WILL BE THE FIRST CANADIAN TO HOLD SUCH HIGH OFFICE IN AN INTERNATIONAL UNION.

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3. WHILE THE CONTEST FOR INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP WAS MUCH LESS BITTER THAN IN THE U.S. THE COMPETITION FOR SUCCESSOR TO MAHONEY, (WHO IS IN ILL HEALTH AND RETIRING SHORTLY, AS USWA NATIONAL DIRECTOR) AND FOR DISTRICT DIRECTORSHIPS BECAME ENMESHED IN QUEBEC SEPARATIST AND NATIONAL AUTONOMY ISSUES. GERARD DOCQUIER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR DISTRICT 5 (QUEBEC AND

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ATLANTIC PROVINCES) RUNNING ON "ESTABLISHMENT SLATE" SUPPORTING MCBRIDE AND WILLIAMS, HAS WON CONTEST FOR NATIONAL DIRECTOR BY 38,746 VOTES AGAINST DON TAYLOR'S 30,355. TAYLOR, WHO WAS MAHONEY'S ASSISTANT BUT RAN AS INDEPENDENT, CHARGED DOCQUIER WITH BEING A SEPARATIST SINCE HE ACTIVELY SUPPORTED PQ ELECTION CAMPAIGN. DOCQUIER COUNTERED THAT HE WOULD NOT MOVE TO TORONTO TO HEAD NATIONAL OFFICE IF HE FAVORED QUEBEC SEPARATISM AND THAT HE WILL BE FIRST CANADIAN USWA DIRECTOR WHO IS FULLY BILINGUAL. THESE ARGUMENTS OBVIOUSLY CONVINCED EVEN ONTARIO AND WESTERN MEMBERS TO GIVE HIM MAJORITY OF VOTES.

4. "ESTABLISHMENT SLATE" ALSO SUCCESSFUL IN ELECTING LYNN WILLIAMS' ASSISTANT, STEWART COOKE, TO SUCCEED HIM AS DISTRICT 6 DIRECTOR. COOKE'S OPPONENT, GILBERT GILCHRIST, NORTHERN ONTARIO SUPERVISOR RUNNING AS INDEPENDENT, CHARGED COOKE WITH LETTING USWA IN CANADA BECOME STAGNANT AND BEING TOO SUBSERVIENT TO PITTSBRUGH HEADQUARTERS. HE LOST ELECTION BY 11,862 TO COOKE'S 21,005. SOME 7,700 VOTES STILL UNCOUNTED FROM TWO INTERNATIONAL NICKEL CO. LOCALS CANNOT OVERTURN COOKE'S LEAD.

5. IN DISTRICT 5 COVERING QUEBEC AND THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES, JEAN GERIN-LAJOIE, WHO ALSO HAD THE SUPPORT OF WILLIAMS, WAS ELECTED BY ACCLAMATION. HE ALSO IS A PQ SUPPORTER BUT REPORTEDLY ANTI-SEPARATIST.

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6. COMMENT: LYNN WILLIAMS EMERGED FROM THESE ELECTIONS THE STRONGEST LEADER IN CANADIAN USWA WHICH HAS THE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP OF ANY INTERNATIONAL AND IS SECOND ONLY TO THE CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AMONG ALL CANADIAN UNIONS. THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS WHO HAD HIS SUPPORT SHOULD BODE WELL FOR CONTINUING CLOSE US-CANADIAN TIES. JUDGING BY WILLIAMS' PAST PERFORMANCE AS A WELL-EDUCATED (B.A. FROM MCMASTER UNIVERSITY), POLITICALLY LIBERAL, BUT BREAD AND BUTTER ORIENTED UNION LEADER, HE WOULD CERTAINLY MAKE A COMPETENT AND EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL OFFICER SHOULD THE MCBRIDE-WOLLIAMS TICKET WIN.
ENDERS

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